

Council on Postsecondary Education
November 5, 2001

Executive Summary

1. Are more Kentuckians ready for postsecondary education?

There is one action item in this section of the agenda.

The staff recommends that the council approve allocations totaling \$1,400,000 for performance rewards (\$200,000), the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (\$650,000), a GED fee waiver program (\$350,000), and postsecondary tuition discounts (\$200,000) from the Adult Education Literacy Trust Fund, 2001-02. (For details, see page 79.)

In May 2001, the council allocated \$ 9,362,000 of the 2001-02 Adult Education Trust Fund for continued implementation of the nine-point adult education plan. For three of the plan initiatives – performance rewards to counties, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy, and tuition discounts – we now estimate that actual costs will exceed currently budgeted amounts. We bring you a recommendation to increase the allocations for those three programs. In addition, we propose waiving the \$30 fee paid by GED test-takers during the first six months of 2002. We think this financial incentive will encourage more Kentuckians to take the new GED tests, which go into effect January 1. These four budget allocations total \$1.4 million.

Governor Patton held a press conference October 15 at the Thorn Hill Learning Center in Frankfort. He announced the strong increases in adult learners (from 50,000 to 63,000 during the last year) and in the number of people taking the GED. Governor Patton was joined by Workforce Development Cabinet Secretary Allen Rose, State Representative Gippy Graham,

Cheryl King, and me. As part of his remarks, the Governor urged GED recipients to seek postsecondary education.

The P-16 Council met in September and endorsed creating a single rigorous curriculum for all high school students, and establishing grade 14 (the equivalent of an associate degree) as a minimum education level in Kentucky. The P-16 Council directed the staffs of the Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education to develop a single high school curriculum for their consideration.

This initiative will be supported by Kentucky's selection as one of five states that will participate in *The American Diploma Project*. Texas, Indiana, Massachusetts, and Nevada are the other four. The project's goal is a model American high school curriculum. Four national organizations – Achieve, Inc., The Education Trust, The Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, and The National Alliance of Business – are sponsoring the project. We shall work within Kentucky and with representatives from the other states to define rigorous standards for high school graduation that prepare students for college work or high performance jobs.

Three local P-16 councils have been funded from Council on Postsecondary Education resources: the Northern Kentucky Council of Partners in Education, the Owensboro Regional Alliance, and a council in Paducah and the area surrounding it. We expect to fund a number of others this year.